
CANCER FACTS

National Cancer Institute • National Institutes of Health

Questions and Answers About the National Cancer Institute's Publications Distribution Policy

1. **What is the National Cancer Institute's policy on distribution of publications and other materials?**

National Cancer Institute (NCI) publications are free. There is a charge to help cover the costs for shipping and handling of bulk orders for NCI materials. Current Federal Government budgetary constraints and NCI's commitment to make its materials available to fill the ever-increasing demand for information about cancer have made these charges necessary. By instituting a program to recover costs of shipping and handling, NCI will ensure that the information needs of cancer patients, their families, health professionals, and the general public are met.

2. **What do these charges cover?**

The charges are designed to recover the costs of labor, packing, order processing, and shipping to fulfill bulk orders (any order for more than 20 items). There is no shipping and handling charge for orders of 20 or fewer items—such an order may consist of 20 copies of one title or any combination of titles up to a total of 20 items.

3. **Will patients still be able to get NCI materials without shipping and handling charges?**

Based on past ordering patterns, the average size of orders from patients and the general public is 18 items. Therefore, the ability to receive 20 items without shipping and handling charges will ensure that patients and their families continue to receive NCI materials without cost.

4. **What is the charge for shipping and handling?**

The first 20 items are sent without charge. Orders exceeding 20 publications are considered bulk orders with a shipping and handling fee of 10 cents per copy. To cover the basic accounting costs associated with processing payments for bulk orders, NCI requires a \$5 minimum charge. This means that any order over the 20 item limit will be charged a \$5 minimum.

5. Is there a discount for ordering large quantities of materials?

A discount is applied for orders of 100 or more items.

6. How will NCI publication orders be shipped?

Orders of up to 20 publications will be through the U.S. Postal Service. Bulk orders will be shipped in the quickest possible way via a package delivery service such as UPS, FedEx, or a comparable carrier, or by freight.

7. What is the advantage of shipping orders via UPS or comparable carrier?

In the continental United States, orders shipped by UPS should arrive within 7 working days, depending on geographic location. In addition, orders shipped through UPS or comparable carriers can be traced in the event they are lost. All orders are shipped from NCI's Distribution Center in Baltimore, Maryland.

8. Is there a charge for rush orders?

Rush orders will be charged the normal rate of 10 cents per copy plus the actual expedited shipping charges. Payment must be made via credit card at the time of ordering. VISA, MasterCard, and American Express are accepted.

9. Is there a limit to the number of copies of publications that can be ordered?

The number of copies of individual titles that may be ordered depends on current inventory. To ensure that publications are available to all requesters, NCI may set limits on the maximum number of copies that may be ordered by any one requester each month. For information on current availability of NCI materials, please call the Publications Ordering Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237).

10. How often can publications be ordered?

For personal use, cancer patients, their families, and the general public may order NCI publications as often as necessary to fulfill their needs. However, in order to maintain an adequate stock of publications, NCI requests that health professionals and organizations place bulk orders no more than once a month.

11. How will underpayments, overpayments, and refunds be handled?

Underpayments:

If an order is underpaid, the quantity of materials shipped will be adjusted down.

Overpayments:

Overpayments of more than \$10 will be refunded. Requesters will receive a reimbursement check in the amount of the overpayment. If an order is overpaid by \$10 or less, the quantity of the materials shipped will be adjusted upward.

Refunds:

NCI will not make refunds or offer exchanges on orders after they have been shipped. In the event of a shipping error, we will send a refund or free replacement of the order.

12. How will foreign orders be handled?

It is NCI policy to send single copies of up to 5 publications free from cost recovery to individuals or organizations outside of the United States. All foreign orders with requests for 6 or more publications will be charged actual shipping costs. (Foreign requesters will not receive 20 free items.)

The procedure for foreign orders of 6 items or more involves these steps:

- Requester will submit order to the Publications Ordering Service and include address, telephone, and fax numbers to receive cost estimate.
- POS will fax back the estimated cost of the order to the requester.
- The requester will forward the cost estimate and payment (check or money order in U.S. currency or credit card number) to the following address:

Publications Ordering Service
Post Office Box 24128
Baltimore, MD 21227

- When the request and payment are received, the order will be shipped immediately.

13. What are the methods of payment for orders?

Arrangements for payment of shipping and handling charges must be made in advance. Payment for bulk orders will be accepted by check, money order, credit card (VISA, MasterCard, or American Express only), purchase order, or deposit account. Checks or money orders should be made payable to the Publications Ordering Service. Payments for bulk orders should be mailed to the following address:

Publications Ordering Service
Post Office Box 24128
Baltimore, MD 21227

14. How can I find out more about NCI's publication distribution policy?

Additional information about NCI's publications distribution policy is available from the Publications Ordering Service of the NCI's Cancer Information Service. The toll-free number of the CIS is 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). Callers should select prompt #2 to order publications. For TTY service, call 1-800-332-8615.

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Sources of National Cancer Institute Information

Cancer Information Service

Toll-free: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

TTY (for deaf and hard of hearing callers): 1-800-332-8615

NCI Online

Internet

Use <http://cancer.gov> to reach NCI's Web site.

CancerMail Service

To obtain a contents list, send e-mail to cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov with the word "help" in the body of the message.

CancerFax® fax on demand service

Dial 301-402-5874 and listen to recorded instructions.

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